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Climate change — making your garden grow

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Our climate is changing and for many gardeners the first evidence of this can already be seen in gardens across the UK. Seasons are already changing with spring now arriving up to six days earlier than a decade ago and autumn ending up to two days later.

Research undertaken by the Met Office Hadley Centre has also confirmed that the growing season of plants is likely to increase by around 40 days by 2080, due to the earlier start to spring and later end to autumn.

By 2080 our summers are likely to be both warmer and drier with an increased risk of drought. Winters too will be milder, but are likely to be wetter as well. A decline in the likelihood of frosty nights and increased rainfall means gardeners may need to be more concerned with waterlogged roots rather than frost damage.

Met Office climate change experts have teamed up with RHS Garden Wisley to create the Climate Change Dome at the RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show next week. The Met Office and RHS will be giving daily presentations on the changing climate and the threats and opportunities for gardeners.

Visitors will also be able to see simulations of climate in the future; the facts about climate change; record their own weather forecast for the future and see the special 'bug zoo' showing some of the bugs and wildlife which may be threatened by, or even thrive under, a changing climate.

Notes:

The Hampton Court Palace Flower Show runs from 8-13 July 2008.

Facts behind climate change and gardening

Faster: UK gardeners need to cut their lawns almost two weeks earlier than they did in 2001.

Slower: The yield of fruit trees is reduced when the buds fail to break in mild UK winters.

Wetter: January rainfall could increase by 25% in central and southern England by 2080.

Drier: July rainfall could decrease by 45% in South West England by 2080.

Earlier: Spring has advanced by 2-6 days per decade in the UK.

Later: Autumn has been delayed by two days per decade in the UK.

Climate change - the big picture
Climate change is a complex subject, with genuine areas of uncertainty and scientific controversy. On this page you will find all the known facts about climate change.

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